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DRY FIRE:

The Fastest Way to Lock in Firearms Skill

Dry fire is one of those topics that people like to talk about, but few actually do. I can understand that...I don't find it to be particularly exciting, and it's kind of frustrating only going through the motions with a firearm when I know how much fun it is to actually shoot.

Dry fire is one of those topics that people like to talk about, but few actually do. I can understand that...I don't find it to be particularly exciting, and it's kind of frustrating only going through the motions with a firearm when I know how much fun it is to actually shoot.

But the benefits of dry fire are overwhelming... and if you really want to become proficient with your firearm, it's important to understand that a combination of dry fire and live fire will help you do it much quicker and cheaper than live fire alone.

If you're a fan of boxing or MMA, one of the most relatable ways to look at dry fire training is to realize that it is a shooting version of shadow boxing. Many professional boxers "shadow" throw the nine basic punches 1,000 times per day, for a total of 9,000 shadow punches every day—perfecting their technique, timing, efficiency, muscle memory, and speed without undue stress on their body. Dry fire will give you the same benefits.

In addition, dry fire training will almost guarantee that you don't fall victim to the most common handgun shooting error—jerking the firearm in anticipation of recoil.

Not everyone's like me and some people DO want to practice dry fire techniques, but they still don't get it done because they don't have a clear action plan of what to do when they are doing their dry fire training. It becomes easier to just put off dry fire training until tomorrow instead of figuring out exactly what drills to do. We'll cover that, too.

Dry fire training will help you focus on all of the fundamentals of shooting...right up until the firing pin hits the primer. And it will allow you to focus on all of these

fundamentals without paying for ammo, range time, gas, or having to clean your firearm. From a teaching perspective, it programs your mind without any concern for recoil and the downward flinch and low groups that come from anticipating recoil.

We're mainly going to cover fundamentals today, but I'm also going to show you some of the drills that I use that will REALLY spice up your dry fire drills. But first we need to lay a solid foundation and go over how to properly practice dry fire as well as some specific drills you can do to help you lock in good, fundamental shooting techniques.

If you want to know how much you should practice dry firing, a good rule of thumb is that you should dry fire 20 to 50 times for every round that you practice live fire. It would be great if you could practice every technique 1,000 times per day like a professional fighter, but that's not realistic for most people.

Still, try to do as many as your schedule allows. The one major exception to this is that you should slow down or stop as soon as your form falls off. Doing dry fire training with poor or inconsistent form will only hurt your ability to develop high quality muscle memory. Remember, we want to lock PERFECT technique into our muscle memory...not a combination of 80% perfect training and 20% sloppy training.

The high ratio of dry fire to live fire is most important during the learning phase. The logic

behind it is based in part on the fact that when you train with live fire, any misses are a waste of time, money, and muscle memory. Once you've got the muscle memory locked in with dry fire, you can spend more time on live fire training because you won't be wasting time, money, or muscle memory.

The other part of why you want to spend so much time locking in and perfecting techniques with dry fire is because it allows you to completely ignore the "boom" and recoil, and focus on proper technique. Breaking down the process like this will help you get many more rounds on target, more quickly, than with live fire alone.

Since we're dealing with a firearm designed to cause lethal damage, I've got to tell you the obvious advice of making sure that your firearm is unloaded when you're handling it and that you don't point it at anything you don't intend on destroying. I don't mean for this to be a downer, but anything having to do with a firearm, ESPECIALLY dry fire training, is serious business.

I said this before, but it's worth repeating. The general concepts behind these drills will work for ANY type of firearm...pistol, revolver, shotgun, rifle and any type of action...single, double, DAO, pump, break, bolt, semi-auto, etc. Because of popularity and for ease of reading, I'm going to focus on semi-automatic pistols. If you're not training with a semi-automatic pistol, please adjust the following rules accordingly.

Safety RULES

(not guidelines or suggestions...
they're RULES.)



1. **Get rid of all distractions:** electronic, two legged, and four-legged, while you're training, and make sure that your mental state is un-altered, clear, well rested, and that you are able to safely manipulate a firearm.
2. **Make sure to remove the magazine,** fully rack the slide three times, lock the slide open, visually inspect the chamber and physically inspect the chamber by inserting a finger to confirm that your weapon doesn't have any ammo in it.
3. **Remove any live ammo from the room where you're doing dry fire training.** If you use dummy rounds, empty them from your magazines until you can see the

follower on every magazine you intend to use and can confirm that they're empty.

4. **Pick a backstop that will stop any negligent discharges.** Another way of looking at this is to quickly calculate the cost of a negligent discharge and decide if you could live with it. For me, when I do dry fire training at home, this means that I do my dry fire in our basement facing an outside wall so that the most likely outcome of a negligent discharge would be some sheetrock repair, possibly bracing a damaged (non load bearing) stud, possibly replacing a section of wiring, and a slight chance of ricochet damage.

5. **Always treat your firearm as if it's loaded—even during dry fire training.** This means using proper gun handling discipline at all times. All of my friends who have had negligent discharges have had them with "empty" firearms.

6. **Always know what's beyond your target and backstop.**

7. **Never point your gun at anything you're not willing to destroy**—and that goes for TVs, people in the next room, next door neighbors, cars, etc. This is serious business and your first and only negligent action could kill someone, ruin your life, and possibly put you in jail. As mentioned in rule #4, calculate the potential cost.

8. **The transition from dry fire back to live ammo is a particularly critical time.**

When you finish your dry fire training, the first step you should take is to take down the target that you used. According to the instructors at FrontSight, practicing "just one more time" is one of the most common reasons that dry fire training negligent discharges happen. Removing your dry fire target is one more way to ensure safety.

When you reintroduce live ammo, repeat the following phrase out loud until your firearm is holstered or stored securely, "Live ammo, Live weapon. Live ammo, Live weapon." It's important that you say these words out loud the entire time you're handling your firearm when you're transitioning from dry fire to live ammo.

The transition from dry fire to live ammo is so critical that some trainers even suggest storing the weapon that you are doing dry fire training with for a half hour or more before re-introducing live ammo.

As an additional safety measure, you can run a piece of paracord through the barrel so that it sticks out of both the muzzle and ejection port, use a snap cap, or a Blade-Tech training barrel insert. **None of these are a replacement for the rules above. They should be used in addition, not instead of the above rules.**

Too much stress? This is serious business. You're training with a tool that's designed to destroy

things at a distance. If you aren't completely confident about having the discipline to follow the rules above perfectly, then have a firearms instructor work with you until you are.

Now that we've got that covered, let's start training!

CONSISTENT GRIP. Having a consistent grip is the foundation of shooting. I believe it was famed firearms instructor, Colonel Jeff Cooper, who said that if he had an hour to spend training someone with a pistol, he'd spend 50 minutes of that hour teaching them how to consistently obtain a proper grip.

After going through the safety steps I mentioned, grab the firearm that you want to start training with and take a couple of minutes to REALLY pay attention to how it feels in your hand(s). Take note of how every square inch of your hand feels and what it's touching. You don't even need your firearm in your holster right now. Just hold it in your hand(s) using whatever technique you have been taught or adopted.

This may seem kind of "touchy-feely", but if you're training for the possibility of using a firearm to defend yourself in a lethal force encounter, it makes sense that you take the time to "get to know it."

In general, I'd tell you that you want to have a "natural" grip on the firearm. Here's an example of what your natural grip would be when firing one handed.

- 1. Bring your hands up to your face and make two fists.**
- 2. Pick a target to punch.**
- 3. Very slowly, go through the motions of throwing a punch with your shooting arm.** Stop the punch when your arm is outstretched and is perpendicular to your body (making an "L"). Rotate your fist so that if you were holding a pencil or broom, it would be at a 45 degree angle to the ground.

If you were to release your fist, put your firearm in your hand, and make your fist around the



firearm so that your sights are lined up with your target, you'd have your natural one-handed grip. By rotating your hand so that if you were holding a pencil or broom it would be straight up and down and bringing it together with your support hand, you'll roughly have your natural two-handed grip.

Instructors differ on the nuances on the best grips, so I'll simply encourage you to get competent instruction and train what they teach you. I've done formal training with numerous Spec Ops guys, local and federal SWAT operators, mercenaries/security contractors, and one notable champion speed shooter, and their techniques are all slightly different based on their experiences and biases. In their common quest for efficiency and effectiveness, most of them have ended up with VERY similar techniques, so don't get too hung up on minor differences from one instructor to another.

Your grip will be slightly different from firearm to firearm. My grip is different with my Glocks, 1911s, and with my revolvers. Grip angle is different, the girth of the grip is different, and the shape is different, varying from a square with Glocks to a rectangle with 1911s to an oval with revolvers. That being said, my grip on my Glocks is exactly the same every time. I know the feel of the grip against my hand and I know when it's off slightly without looking. The reason I'm able to do this is that I took the time, several times, to consciously pay attention to how

the firearm feels in my hand(s).

I pay attention to what each joint of each finger is touching and how it feels. I pay attention to the pressure on the webbing between my thumb and index finger. I know how far forward the thumb on my shooting hand goes and what it is touching. I know where my index finger will touch the trigger and I know what the side of the gun feels like when my finger is off the trigger.

On my subcompact, I know that my pinky slides under the grip with my subcompact mags and touches the front of the mag on full size mags.

As you're holding your firearm, take a minute to identify these same specific feelings on your firearm.

Now move your hand slightly, figure out what's different and what you will do to fix the situation if you feel the same in the future.

As an example, if you grab your firearm, the webbing between your thumb and index finger should be as high up on the grip as possible. If you recognize that you don't have the right pressure against your webbing, you know that you need to move your grip up on the pistol.

As another example, I know that when I grab a 1911, my first knuckles are all straight in front of the front strap and I know how that feels. If my hand is wrapped around the grip too much or not enough, I know what I need to do without looking to correct my grip.

Besides acquiring a bad grip during your draw stroke, one of the most common corrections that you'll need to make if you've got shorter

fingers is during the process of reloading. On a semi auto with a thumb side mag release, most people can't touch the mag release button with their thumb when they have a proper grip on the firearm.

To fix this problem, people generally "cant" their firearm or rotate it in their grip so that their thumb can reach the mag release button. At some point between when you depress the mag release button and when you get ready for your next shot, you're going to need to reacquire a proper grip. Most people do this without thinking and have poor muzzle discipline during the procedure. I want you to focus on making these changes in your grip while maintaining proper muzzle discipline.

Take a couple of minutes and move the gun back and forth between a good grip and a grip that needs to be fixed. Make sure that you maintain proper muzzle discipline. Specifically, work on your response when you find yourself grabbing the firearm in the following ways:

1. **Too low of a grip.**
2. **Too high of a grip.**
3. **Web of your hand away from the grip.**
4. **Bottom of your grip away from the butt of the grip.**
5. **Two handed grip with your support thumb on top of your shooting thumb.**
(Leads to a "snake bite" or two slices



across the top of your support thumb when your slide flies back during recoil.)

6. **Firearm turned too far clockwise.**
7. **Firearm turned too far counterclockwise.**

After you have gotten comfortable with the difference between the feel of a good grip and a bad grip, grab your firearm a few times while looking at it and then look away or with your eyes shut. Finally, following the dry fire safety rules, lay your firearm down on a table or the ground within arm's reach, shut your eyes, grab it and pick it up 20 times in a row. Each time you pick it up, evaluate whether or not you are holding it correctly. If not, identify what's wrong and adjust it until it feels perfect, open your eyes to confirm, then set it back down.

You'll want to get similarly familiar with any weapons that you might use for self-defense. For now, let your brain focus on training with one particular firearm until the grooves in your memory are worn deep.



TRIGGER PRESS

The next skill we're going to go over is a smooth trigger pull/press. Visually and physically confirm (again) that the firearm is unloaded. Then bring the empty firearm up and aim it at something you don't mind destroying and slowly pull the trigger straight back... the smaller and more precise, the better. Your trigger finger shouldn't squeeze like you're making a fist or push off to the side—It should press straight back. You should keep aiming as you pull the trigger and your aim should never come off of the intended target, even when the trigger breaks and the firing pin is released to strike the primer on your bullet. You should press the trigger slowly enough that you don't know when the release will happen.

As you continue to practice keeping your sights lined up all the way through the trigger press, you'll be able to speed up your trigger press without any impact on your

accuracy. In general, don't press the trigger so fast that your sight alignment gets messed up, but keep trying to squeeze the trigger faster.

Re-rack the slide on your firearm between dry fires (while maintaining muzzle discipline) and practice your trigger press 10 times. Specifically, you're trying to condition your mind to do three things with this drill: Aim all the way through the trigger press. Squeeze the trigger instead of jerking it. Keep the firearm aimed at your intended target instead of trying to compensate for recoil by pushing the point of aim down.

While practicing this, it's very common to notice something that you never noticed while shooting live fire—a sticky or jerky trigger. This can make a smooth trigger press much more difficult, and it is a good sign that you need to clean and lubricate your firearm.

Do repeat sets of 10 until you can keep your sights on target all the way through your

trigger press for all 10 repetitions, then try this fun training technique:

Pick a target that is roughly at the same height as your eyes, aim at it with your firearm and lay the coin on the front sight (this may not be possible on all pistols) and pull the trigger. Your trigger squeeze should be so smooth that the coin stays on the front sight and doesn't fall off as you're squeezing the trigger. The release of the hammer may vibrate the coin off. That's out of your control and OK.

FOLLOW THROUGH.

Now we're going to add on follow through. As you're dry firing, think about getting a proper sight picture, firing, and then following through by getting the proper sight picture again as quickly as possible. You won't have recoil to worry about when dry firing, so your sight picture should stay constant, but this is a good time to repeat the refrain, "sight picture, trigger press, sight picture."

If you're fuzzy on what a "sight picture" is, it's what you see as you're looking at a target when you have your firearm lined up for a perfect shot. Generally, this means having the front sight perfectly centered between the rear sights, front and rear sights lined up vertically, and the intended target immediately over the top of the front sight.

Practice dry firing 10 times focusing on reacquiring your sights immediately after the trigger breaks.

Repeat this drill until you can quickly

reacquire your sights after pressing the trigger, then move on.

TRIGGER RESET.

After you discharge a firearm, the trigger only needs to go forward until the sear re-engages for the next shot. On double action pistols, this may be ½ the distance that your finger traveled for the first shot, or less. If your trigger or your finger travels further forward after a shot than the point where the sear re-engages, it's called "over travel" and it's not good.

Over travel leads to inconsistent follow-up shots. From now on, unless you're shooting the last repetition of a set, every time you dry fire, keep the trigger pressed until you have racked the slide. Then slowly let the trigger go forward until you feel/hear the click of the sear re-engaging and immediately press for your next shot. Mastering trigger reset is absolutely VITAL to being able to put multiple rounds on target quickly and your sequence will become:

Sight picture, trigger press, sight picture
(follow through), trigger reset, trigger press

The combination of follow-through and trigger reset will help you get on target MUCH faster for controlled pairs and other multiple shot strings. Practice dry firing 20 times, putting together the entire sequence. Go only as fast as you can without compromising your form:

Sight picture, trigger press, sight picture,
trigger reset, trigger press

Bringing your firearm up into your line of sight.

You should practice this drill using both one and two hands. When you can pull the trigger smoothly and consistently, it's time to move on.

When you're shooting at a range, you'll see people go through all sorts of contortions with their heads while they're shooting trying to get their eye lined up with the sights on their firearms.

In a violent force encounter, your focus will normally be drawn to what your brain interprets as the most serious threat. In addition, as your pulse rate shoots up, your vision will go from being able to see everything in front of you to tunnel vision—similar to what it would look like if you had an empty paper towel cylinder up to your eye.

We want to take advantage of this tendency instead of fight it, so we want to train our mind to bring our firearm up so that our sights will be in our line of sight rather than forcing our head and eyes to line up with our sights.

Put another way, let's say that you're holding your firearm at your side and you spot a target. At this point, your head can freeze.

You don't need to move your head at all from the instant of threat recognition until you have completed your trigger press and follow through. Simply bring up your firearm and adjust the firearm as necessary so that your sights are in line between your eyes and your intended target. You're already familiar with this concept from using a punching motion to find your natural grip.

What you need to do to develop this is to stand with your firearm at your side or sit with your firearm on your lap or on a table and repeatedly pick out a target and bring your firearm up so that the sights line up between your eye and your target.

There are 4 variations to this drill:

- **Primary hand, single handed**
- **Primary hand, with support**
- **Support hand, single handed**
- **Support hand, with support**

Repeat this drill at least 20 times with your primary hand both single handed and with support before moving on. Initially, either focus completely on your primary hand or spend twice as much time on your primary hand as your support hand. In an ideal world, you would have enough time to become equally proficient with both hands. If that's the case for you, then split your training time evenly.

Aiming With Your Eyes Shut.

You should do this drill using one or two hands.

This drill helps strengthen the mind-muscle connection to lock in your natural point of aim so that it's the same as the point where you're focusing your eyes.

With your firearm at your side, look at the target that you were using on the last drill. Now, shut your eyes, bring up your firearm until you think it is aiming at your target and open your eyes to confirm. Adjust your firearm as necessary so that it's aimed correctly and take note of how everything feels and repeat the drill.

You'll find that this is much easier if you keep your firearm close to your body as you raise it up and "punch" it straight out rather than swinging it up in an arc. Coincidentally, this is also the most "efficient" way to raise a firearm and the method used by people who regularly use firearms in lethal force encounters.

This drill may take a few sessions to master, but once you do, you'll notice a dramatic improvement in your ability to engage targets quickly.

This particular drill is very valuable for several reasons. The first of which is that you may find your sights broken or obscured at some point when you NEED to fire. If you know that your

natural point of aim will put rounds on target, you will be less likely to hesitate.

Second, despite repeatedly training to aim with their sights, there are numerous stories of law enforcement who shot attackers and don't remember seeing their sights...they only remember seeing the barrel of the gun pointed at them by an attacker and the biggest fire they've ever seen coming out of the end, and firing back. By training so that when you raise your weapon, your sights naturally come into alignment with your eyes and your target, you're more likely to be able to put rounds on target under extreme stress.

From a self defense standpoint, there's an even more important reason for training bringing your firearm up to your line of sight rather than moving your eyes so they line up with your firearm.

In "Sharpening the Warrior's Edge" Bruce Siddle goes into detail about how your ability to focus on close up objects diminishes with high pulse rates induced by stress. Focusing the eye is a function of the parasympathetic nervous system and it works very well normally. Once stress levels and pulse rates go up, your body switches over to the sympathetic nervous system. This happens somewhere between 145 and 175 beats per second. Unfortunately, the sympathetic nervous system isn't very good at details like focusing on objects close to you...like your sights.

So, if you practice bringing your firearm up into your line of sight and train to find your natural point of aim, you'll be much more likely to be able

to get off accurate shots under extreme stress when you may or may not be able to focus. This is important, both because you want to be able to stop violent threats as efficiently as possible and because you are responsible for every round that you fire.

There are 4 variations to this drill:

- **Primary hand, single handed**
- **Primary hand, with support**
- **Support hand, single handed**
- **Support hand, with support**

Repeat this drill at least 20 times with your primary hand both single handed and with support before moving on.



3 “Position” Draw Stroke

This draw stroke is sometimes called the 3 position draw stroke, 4 position draw stroke, 3 part draw stroke, or 4 part draw stroke. The confusion comes from the fact that there are different naming systems for the same draw stroke.

1. **“Holster”** -- Firearm holstered, hand off of the firearm.
2. **“Grip”** – Firearm holstered, correct grip on firearm.
3. **“Position 1”** – Firearm just clearing the holster.

4. **“Position 2”** – Body square to your target, firearm at chest level, tilted outward with the butt of the firearm against your chest. This is where you disengage and reengage your safety, if you have one.

Without a firearm in your hand, you would be making a fist with your palm up against the side of your chest like you would if you were preparing to throw a “formal” martial arts punch. If you were to fire the firearm from this position, the slide would not hit your chest like it would if the firearm was straight up and down. Conceptually, you should have your firearm aimed at your target from this point on, so that you can fire at any time and make solid hits on your target.

There is debate on what to do with your support hand at this step. The two big

schools of thought are 1. To grab the center of your shirt and pull or 2. Hold your hand up near your face in a defensive position, since it's likely that you'll be drawing after being startled and that's where your hand will go during a normal startle response anyhow.

5. **“Position 3”** – Firearm is pushed out into firing position with the sights on your firearm coming into alignment between your eyes and your target. The motion from Position 2 to Position 3 is a simple punch.

There's also debate on whether to hold your support hand in front of your chest to “catch” your firearm as it's moving forward or to have it follow behind and “catch-up” between position 2 and position 3. Personally, I am a fan of “catching up” or just shooting one handed, but the experts that I've trained under are split down the middle on which technique is better.

In general, if you are in a situation where you are in control of your pulse, such as in competition or a combat veteran, it's better to use 2 hands and the “catch” method will allow you to put rounds on target more accurately and quickly. If, on the other hand, you're training to defend yourself in what will be your first—or one of your first—lethal force encounters, you're better off training to “catch up” to minimize the chance of shooting your support hand.

Practice going through the following sequence 10 times using only your strong hand:

Holster, Grip, Position 1, Position 2, Holster -- Pay attention to your grip, that

your firearm is pointed towards your target in position 2, and that you can holster your firearm without looking at your holster.

We're starting to stack multiple muscle sequences on top of one another and it's VITAL that you only go fast enough that you can repeat these techniques smoothly, efficiently, and exactly the same way every time. If you're getting flustered or messing up, S L O W down. You'll develop speed more quickly by becoming efficient than you will by moving fast.

Repeat if you're not smooth and efficient, otherwise, go through the following sequence 10 times using only your strong hand:

Holster, Grip, Position 2, Safety off, Position 3, Position 2, Safety on, Holster.

Repeat if you're not smooth and efficient, otherwise go through the following sequence 10 times using only your strong hand:

Holster, Grip, Position 2, Safety off, Position 3, Trigger press, Rack the slide, Position 2, Safety on, Holster.

Variations on this that you'll want to practice are:

- Strong hand only.
- Strong hand with support.
- Support hand only. (I don't practice drawing with my support hand and then using a 2 handed grip because I would use my strong hand to draw unless it was injured. If it was injured, it's not likely that I could use it for support.)

Drawing From Concealment

You may be fortunate, like me, to have a range that allows you to draw from concealment. As they've gotten to know me and my gun handling discipline, they'll even put me on an end lane and let me use an ankle holster or shoulder holster. Most people aren't so fortunate, and even if you are, dry fire practice will make your draw much more efficient, smooth, and fast.

This is a very important skill to practice with dry fire because of the likelihood that you'll end up with a cover garment pulling your trigger as you reholster. It's also extremely likely that you may point the firearm at yourself at some point during your presentation.

I practice dry fire from concealment at my office 3-5 times a week with whatever I happen to be wearing at the time. It's important that you practice this with as much of your wardrobe as possible so you can see which techniques will work best with all of your clothes. As an example, my shirts clear differently based on how heavy they are, how long they are, and how tight they are. I've developed a one handed stroke to clear my cover garment, clear my holster, and present my firearm with the clothing that I wear on a daily basis. Most importantly, I test and confirm that it works hundreds of times a month.

Personally, I carry on my strong side hip, inside the waistband. What I do is draw my hand back along my body, clearing any cover garments, if

I'm wearing one. Next, I hook my thumb up under my shirt(s) behind the butt of my firearm, move my hand forward over my firearm, and push my hand down as I grip the firearm and then pull it clear of the holster. The downward "push" helps me get a consistent grip on the firearm, and the muscle memory is transferrable when I'm carrying in a Serpa holster, which requires a downward push to release the retention.

*****Sometimes my shirt tail or coat gets stuck between my hand and the grip on my sidearm and I've found that I can push the firearm forward to remove the shirt. As a note, if there's any chance that your shirt could get inside your trigger guard as you re-holster with your method of carry, you need to figure out another technique for re-holstering. All of my holsters cover my trigger and thousands of dry fire repetitions have proven to me that this is a safe and effective option for me. It may not be for you.*****

Your draw stroke is going to be somewhat different depending on how you carry. In waist band (un-tucked), in waist band (tucked), 3:00 carry, appendix carry, crotch carry, cross draw, compression shirt, belly band, ankle holster, shoulder rig, purse carry, and in the pocket all require slightly different techniques, but here are the common elements:

- 1. Clear your cover garment.**
- 2. Acquire your grip.**
- 3. Clear your holster and continue with the 3 part draw stroke.**

If you intend to carry concealed, go through the following sequence 10 times:

Clear your cover garment, Grip, Position 2, Safety



off, Position 3, Trigger press, Rack the slide, Position 2, Safety on, Holster (This simply adds clearing your garment to the sequence.)

Here are 9 other dry fire drills that you should do if you intend on eventually using the skills with live fire.

1. **Emergency and tactical reloads.**
2. **Malfunction drills.**
3. **Single handed reloads (using your primary and secondary hand...both emergency and tactical).**
4. **Drawing and firing with the gloves that you normally wear (if you're in a cold climate).**
5. **Drawing and firing with your coat on.**
You may very well determine that your draw from under your coat takes so long that your only reasonable action is to find cover before attempting it. If this is the case, incorporate finding cover into your dry fire practice.
6. **Drawing and firing after being knocked down** (lay on the ground and practice drawing, aiming and firing from all orientations.) I've even started scenarios laying on the ground with a door laying on

top of me to simulate someone kicking a door in/down.

7. **Drawing and possibly firing while moving for cover.** Don't move extra slow, simply so that you can fire a shot before you get to cover. If you need to get to cover, get to cover...if you have time to shoot before you get there, fine. If not, get to cover and then pop out to shoot around your cover.
8. **Work with a flashlight.** Including identifying targets, acquiring your sights in the dark, and knowing what in the heck to do with the flashlight during malfunctions, and reloads.
9. **Draw and aim your firearm while in your garage, sitting in your car.** It should be obvious, but do not do this if there's a possibility that your neighbors will see you.

And here are some advanced drills that you can do:

1. **Put your hands in ice water, snow, or salty ice water for as long as you can take it...30 seconds if you have arthritis up to 2 minutes, and then go through your drills. It's your choice on whether to dry your hands off or not.**
2. **Do calisthenics/workout until you're out of breath and then do your drills.** If you

notice that you're a little shaky and your fine motor skills aren't working quite right, go through your drills then. You won't be able to simulate the exact fight or flight response, but you can inoculate your brain to many aspects of it by doing firearms training when you are out of breath and or when your muscles aren't responding the way you expect. This may cause you to simplify your techniques considerably.

3. **Video tape your technique and analyze it.** Most new digital cameras have a video feature that you can use for this, or you can even use a \$10-\$20 webcam if the frame rate is smooth enough. As you analyze yourself, look for wasted motion. Try going through your drills at ½ speed and playing back at 2x speed.
4. **Practice malfunction drills with snap caps.** (plastic shells that are the same size as real ammo that will cycle through your firearm) Practice failure to return to battery, slide lock malfunction, double feeds, and stovepipes if you're using a 1911.
5. **With a partner, have them stand to the side while you press the trigger.** While remaining aimed at the target, have your partner grab the slide of your gun and forcibly rack it backwards with approximately the same force as you'd get with a real discharge. Practice trigger reset, managing the recoil and reacquiring your sights as quickly as possible. If you have snap caps, you can also do malfunction drills and reloads using this technique.
6. **Dry fire training time is also the perfect time to practice keeping your sights**

on target while moving. The most accurate description that I've seen for this technique is calling it a "duck walk." In short, stand like you're going to start walking forward, drop your center of gravity about 6 inches and then move forward keeping your waist at exactly the same height. Put another way, bend your knees so that your belt buckle drops 6 inches and then keep it at that height as you walk.

Imagine that you've got a rail running through your belly button towards your target that is straight as an arrow. The rail doesn't go up or down or right or left...it simply goes straight and your belly button needs to follow it.

This will give you a stable, consistent shooting platform so that you can aim, make accurate follow-up shots, and even make precision shots with enough practice while moving.

Another way to practice your duck walk is to do it while holding a video camera instead of your firearm. Ideally, your technique will be so smooth that your video looks like you're simply zooming in with no bounce or waving back and forth. You can practice it going forward, backwards, side to side, or even going up & down stairs.

